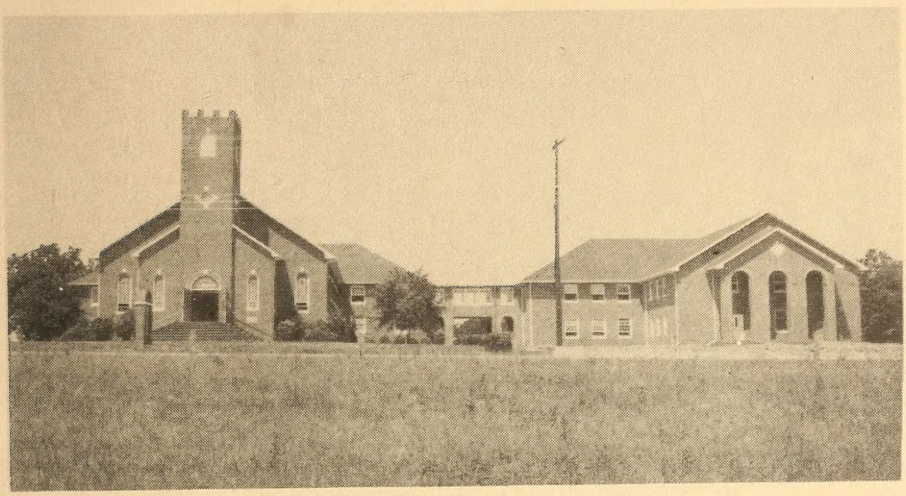
S. FORK

Mt. Ruhama Baptist Church

Rt. 2, Newton, N. C.



Commemorating

ONE HUNDRED FIFTY YEARS
OF PROGRESS FOR THE LORD
1816 - 1966

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State Library of North Carolina
Raleigh

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JUL 26 1966

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DEDICATION

This brochure is dedicated to the memory of our forefathers and to the faithful men, women and ministers who through the years have given of their time, energy and money, in service to Mt. Ruhama Baptist Church, Route 2, Newton, N.C.

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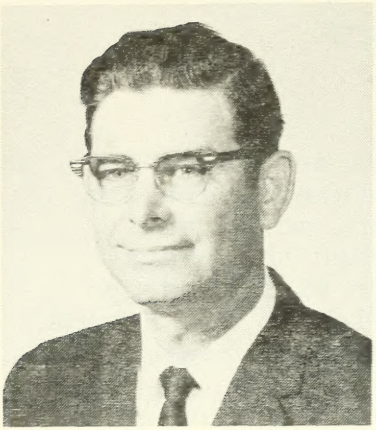
A very sincere expression of gratitude is hereby expressed to the devout men and women who felt the need for a place to worship and had the courage to launch forth to organize a congregation and erect a meeting house for the purpose of divine worship; and for the faithful members of each generation of Mt. Ruhama Baptist Church who down through these One Hundred Fifty years have kept the church in continuous service as a place of divine worship and Christian nurture.

GREETINGS FROM OUR PASTOR



Rev. E. B. Elmore

1963 - ?

I rejoice in the opportunity of sharing in the celebration of the One Hundred Fiftieth Anniversary in the history of this great church. As I think of the past three years, and many of you think and remember as far back as you can remember, precious memories fill your mind and stir your heart. God has been especially good to you in giving you the leadership of the wonderful pastors that you have had. I am sure that we all are thankful for these and many other capable leaders of the church, of the past. Let us pray a prayer of thanksgiving for each leader of the past and present; and pray a prayer of self-dedication to the greater service in the future.

May we realize that the task ahead of our great Church is far greater and more serious than it has ever been in the past; but let us remember that we can also say and do as Paul said, "I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me." Let us also remember that Jesus said, "I am with you alway, even unto the end of the world."

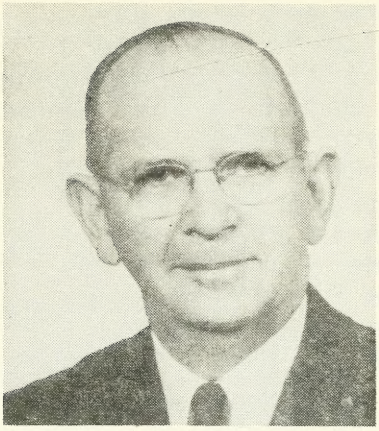
My personal prayer for myself, and each of you as we face the future is that you will have strength for every task, wisdom for every problem, love for every one, God's Spirit and power for every trial, peace and joy in every service, the Holy Comforter in every sorrow, and a complete awareness of the presence of Christ, who is the head of the Church. We are able; so therefore we expect great things from our church as we face the future together under the leadership and guidance of the Holy Spirit. Let us seek to place ourselves unreservedly under His leadership and guidance.

I thank God for the priviledge of being co-laborer with each of you in this great church in His great and glorious Kingdom's service. I covet your prayers and your co-operation in His service. May I always be your friend in Christ.

Your brother in Christ,

Eugene B. Elmore

FORMER PASTORS

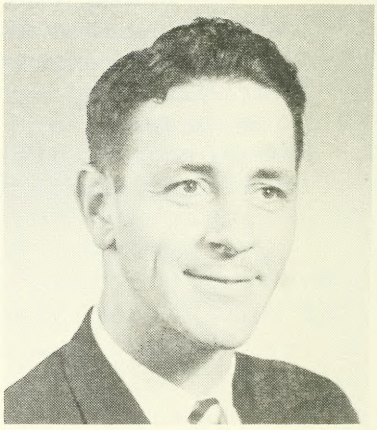


Rev. L. A. McClure

1926 - 1959

Rev. Riley Huckaby

1960 - 1963



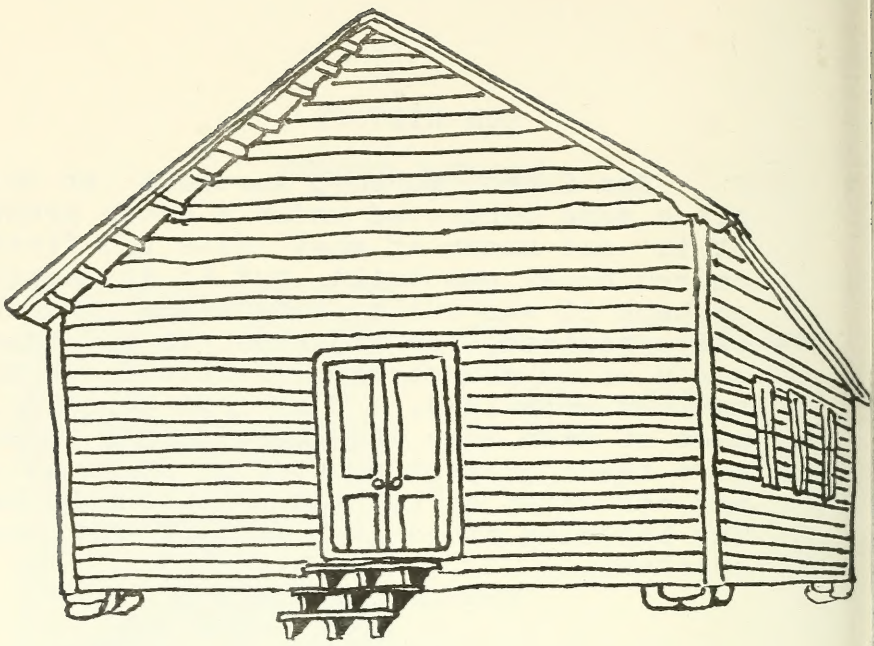
OUR HISTORY

The first worship services at this place were conducted under a brush arbor. It is not known at what date the first church house was built, but it is thought perhaps it was built before the church was organized, for older people say there was a union church here where all denominations worshiped. The first building, made of hewn logs was located on a three acre tract of land donated by Davie Killian and was known as"Killian's Meeting House." The building stood just west of our present cemetery.

CHURCH ORGANIZED

August 3, 1816, Mt. Ruhama Baptist Church was organized by Drury Dobbins and Berryman Hicks, missionaries from the Broad River Association of what was then Rutherford County. At organization there were thirty seven members. At this time there was not a single Baptist church in the entire territory between Hickory and Charlotte, the closest ones being Silver Creek in Burke County and Long Creek at Dallas.

Mt. Ruhama was the fourth church to unite with the Broad River Association. In 1827 the Catawba River Association was organized and Mt. Ruhama united with it. The first Sabbath or Sunday School was established in 1858. When the South Fork Association was organized in 1878, Mt. Ruhama was one of the ten churches joining with this association and still remains a member.



DRAWING OF FIRST FRAME CHURCH ERECTED 1879

SECOND CHURCH ERECTED IN 1913

The church records from 1816 to 1880 were destroyed by fire and there is very little information concerning the early history of the church.

BUILDINGS

In 1879 a one-room frame church building was constructed to replace the first log house. This second church house stood where our present cemetery is located. Rev. John G. Hill preached the first sermon in this new church house on January 31, 1880. (Sale of the property of the first house was .72¢) In 1896 this second building was repaired and later painted. At this time a belfry was added and a bell given to the church by the pastor Rev. W. B. McClure. This same bell is still being used in our present church building.

August 1912 the church held conference and appointed the following, along with the deacons, to act as a building committee to plan for the construction of a new church house: J. M. Crouse, Ed Hewitt, Milton Abernethy, Sr. Robert Drum, Martin Caldwell, Rans Campbell, Marcus Turbyfill and John Withers. The third house was built on the east side of the cemetery on a tract of land bought from A. P. Caldwell containing One and one-half acres. The building was dedicated the fifth Sunday in June 1913, sermon by Rev. M. A. Adams.

All of the Sunday School classes were held in the auditorium with dark green burlap curtains separating the different classes. (Sale of the property of the second house was $68.00)

On May 15, 1928 the first well was completed on the church grounds and a hand pump installed at a cost of $190. Prior to this water was obtained from the well where Brown Laney, Sr. now lives.

The church voted November 30, 1935 to build eight Sunday School rooms to the west and north sides of the church building. George W. Caldwell, Osco Laney and Lee Campbell were the building committee for Mt. Ruhama's first Sunday School rooms. The rooms only cost the church $383.46 as the lumber was given and the labor was done by the people.

The church secured electric lights the last of December 1936 - what a great improvement over the old kerosene lamps.

On November 3,1945 the church voted to start a building fund looking forward to building a new building with adequate facilities to meet the needs of the church. The church voted January 1, 1950 to adopt the recommendation that the building be started. The auditorium to be 50 x 80 ft., with a two-story Sunday School plant 46 x 101 feet to be built at the back consisting of 24 rooms and four rest rooms.

PRESENT CHURCH ERECTED IN 1950

EDUCATIONAL UNIT COMPLETED IN 1966

The following were named by the pastor, Rev. L. A. McClure to serve as the building committee: Robert Drum, Conley Warren, Glenn Abernethy, Bartley Caldwell, Arthur Campbell, Ray Caldwell and Dorsey Caldwell. Robie Goodson was hired as the foreman of the building. In less than a year from the time the church voted to build, the building was completed sufficient to use. Everyone was interested in the building and was proud of it when it was completed. On December 3, 1950 the last worship service was held in the old church, and pastor McClure stated that he had preached 765 sermons in this building. (Sale of this third church building was $960.00.)

The first service held in the new building was the funeral service for one of the deacons, Thomas Cline, on Saturday December 16, 1950. The 23rd Psalm read by the pastor Rev. L. A. McClure was the first Scripture read in the new building.

On Sunday December 17, the first Sunday School was held with 366 present.

The first worship service was held Sunday night December 17. The pastor read the 2nd Chapter of Ephesians using the 19th and 20th verses for a text, "Some Things that Jesus is the Head Of."

The first Revival Services in the new building started March 25, 1951 when the four churches served by our pastor, Center View, Lawings Chapel, Mt. View and Mt. Ruhama, met here with the pastor doing the preaching. Following these services the first baptismal service using the baptistry was on April 1, 1951.

Pansy McAlister (now Mrs. Roy Ratchford) from Lawing's Chapel church was the first person baptized. The two others baptized at this time were Pauline Bean and Harvey Setzer who joined our church. Prior to this time baptismal services were held at Marcus Hewitt's mill pond (above the new bridge built in 1966 near the Joe Wright residence), at Sid Abernethy's fish pond and later a dam was placed in the creek below George W. Caldwell's which was used until the baptistry was built in the new building.

The first wedding in the new church building was December 1, 1951 when Miss Nancy Barringer and Udean Burke were united in marriage by Rev. L. A. McClure.

This fourth building, the first brick one for Mt. Ruhama, was dedicated August 5, 1951 when the church celebrated its 135th Anniversary with Home Coming and Dedication Services. The dedication sermon was preached by Dr. J. C. Canipe, Superintendent of Evangelism of North Carolina. His subject was "Evangelism".

At the Thanksgiving Service on November 24, 1927 the church people surprised the pastor Rev. L. A. McClure by giving him a "Pounding". This custom has continued each year until the present time.

After serving Mt. Ruhama as pastor for 33 years and 8 months, Rev. L. A. McClure resigned as pastor November 15, 1959. This was by far the longest pastorate in Mt. Ruhama's history. Many of the members of our church had never known any other pastor.

Rev. T. L. Cashwell of Gastonia was chosen to serve as supply pastor.

The third Sunday in December 1959, the church voted to call their first full-time pastor. The following were elected to serve as the pulpit committee: Coyte Punch, Ray Von Caldwell, Carl Davis and David Lee Stewart. On January 10, 1960 the church voted to build a parsonage. Alvin Stewart, Bill Beard, Leonard Hovis, Bartley Caldwell and Charlie Story were named as a committee to select sites on which to build, with one to be chosen by the church. Named to the building committee for the parsonage were: Alvin Abernethy, Roy Story, Ralph Caldwell, James Caldwell, Conley Warren, Roy Smith, Jr. and Marvin Sipe. The brick residence contains a den, living room, dining room, kitchen, four bedrooms, a pastor's study and library, two baths, half-basement, utility room and double garage attached. The church accepted the Training Union's gift of a dining room suit for the parsonage and a bedroom suit from Eugene Caldwell for the guest bedroom.

September 11, 1960, Coyte Punch speaking for the pulpit committee recommended Rev. Riley N. Huckaby as a prospective pastor. He was 30 years of age and had been pastor of Center Grove Church, Route 1, Hudson, N. C. for the past three years. After preaching to our people on September 18, he was called as the first full-time pastor in Mt. Ruhama's 144 year history. October 29, Pastor Huckaby and his family moved into the newly constructed parsonage.

The church on January 1, 1961 adopted its first unified budget and voted to use the individual envelope system of giving. The budget for the first year was $26,000.00.

The first Church Bulletin in the history of Mt. Ruhama was given out the Fourth Sunday in June 1961.

Mt. Ruhama was honored by the North Carolina State Grange as the 1961 "Rural Church of the Year." The Pastor Rev. Riley N. Huckaby and 41 members went to Boone, N. C. on October 23, 1961 for the banquet and received the bronze plaque in recognition of this honor.

On the third Sunday in May 1961 a Plans-Survey Committee was elected consisting of: Harry Abernethy, Bill Beard, Etta Caldwell, Virginia Estes, Brown Laney, Jr., Coyte Punch, Roy Ratchford, Jr., Evelyn Smith and Alvin Stewart. They surveyed the needs of the community and selected a plan for a new educational building.

After serving as pastor for two years and three months Rev. Riley N. Huckaby resigned as pastor January 6, 1963 to accept the pastorate of the Ranlo Baptist Church, Gastonia, N. C.

Rev. Robert W. Abrams of Gardner-Webb College was elected Supply Pastor.

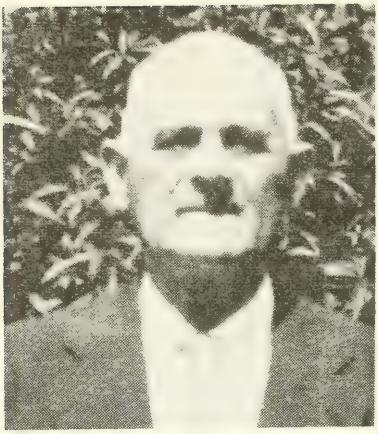
The following were elected to serve as the pulpit committee: Alvin Stewart, Bill Beard, Conley Warren, Roy Ratchford and Harry Abernethy.

As a prospective pastor, Rev. Eugene B. Elmore preached here on June 9, 1963. After his message he was called as the church's full-time pastor. He was 42 years old and had served the following pastorates: Hamilton's Cross Roads Baptist Church, Union County; Southside, Morganton; South Marietta Street, Gastonia. He and his family moved into our church parsonage July 15th. Rev. Elmore preached his first sermon here as pastor July 21, 1963.

On February 10, 1963 Coyte Punch, Chairman of the Plans-Survey Committee presented a building plan for a new educational building. On June 21, 1964 the following were elected as a building committee: Harry Abernethy, James Caldwell, Ray Caldwell, Grover Lineberger and Alvin Stewart. Twin City Builders, Inc. of Newton was given the contract for the new educational building. Total cost of the building to be $117,677.00.

The new two story educational unit was completed in 1966. This unit was started in 1965. Upon completion the church experienced its first Departmentalization of Sunday School on May 15, 1966. This building houses the following departments with assembly rooms and class rooms; Nursery and Beginner, complete with rest room; Junior Department; two Intermediate Departments; Young People's Department; Young Married People's Department and Young Adult Department. This building also has four rest rooms and a kitchen with a combination Fellowship-hall and Young Adult Department Assembly room. The building is completely furnished and is almost fire-proof. The building also houses its own heating system which is adequate for air conditioning. There are about 13,000 square feet of floor space with a spacious over-pass connecting it with the old building, providing covered loading space in bad weather.

MINISTERS ORDAINED SINCE 1900



Rev. L.R.Williams

1914

Rev.C.A.Abernethy

1922

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REACHING OUT

Mt. Ruhama has been instrumental in organizing churches in other communities. In 1827 Thessalonica Church was established about nine miles from Newton on the road leading to Shelby. In 1833 Olivet Church was established. On June 27, 1891 letters were granted to 19 members to organize Maiden First Baptist Church. On August 3, 1904, 25 members were granted letters to organize Piney Grove Baptist Church. On October 5, 1907 letters were granted to 22 members to organize Lawing's Chapel Baptist Church. On August 7, 1915 16 members were granted letters to organize Center View Baptist Church and a little later 14 others took their letters to join that organization.

MINISTERS ORDAINED

Our records show that eleven men have been ordained to the full work of the gospel ministry at Mt. Ruhama.

J. Brumfield in the early 1830's
J. L. Shinn - November 28, 1886
A. W. Setzer - October 28, 1893
J. L. Caldwell - June 17, 1899
L. R. Williams-February 7, 1914
C. A. Abernethy - May 13, 1922
P. K. Drum - March 3, 1923
E. J. Caldwell 1924
Martin Abernethy - April 1, 1939
Howard Laney - November 19, 1950
Guy Helms - January 12, 1958

D. Harding Caldwell a former member of this church was ordained May 1, 1955 by First Baptist Church, Newton, N. C.

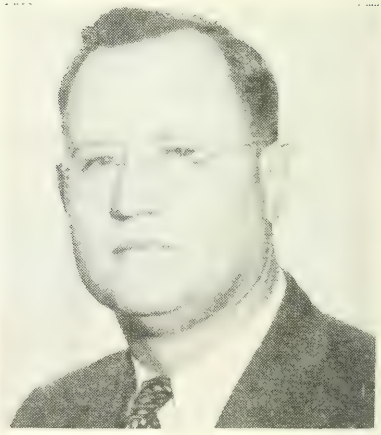
MINISTERS ORDAINED SINCE 1900

Rev. P. K. Drum

1923

Rev.E.J.Caldwell

1924



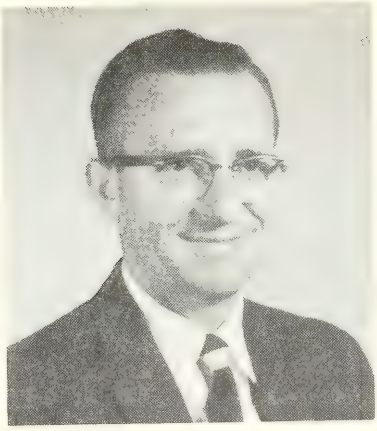
MINISTERS ORDAINED SINCE 1900

Rev. Martin Abernethy

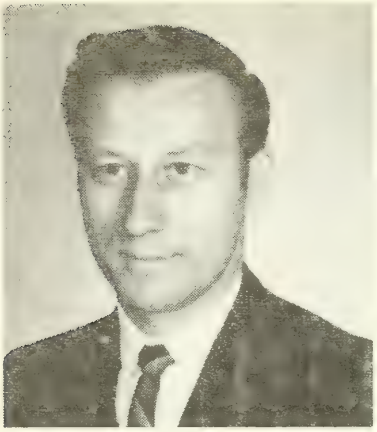
1939

Rev. Howard Laney

1950



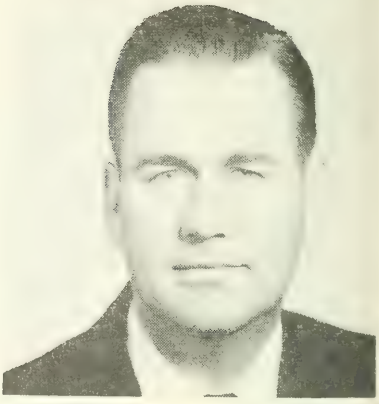
MINISTERS ORDAINED SINCE 1900



Rev. Guy Helms

1958

Rev. D.H.Caldwell
First Baptist Church
Newton, N. C.- 1955



PASTORS

Since the first church records were destroyed by fire the list of pastors is incomplete until 1880. Drury Dobbins and Berryman Hicks preached here until 1825 when Hugh Quinn became pastor. Jeptha Clark was pastor in 1836 and again during part of the 1860's. Barnie Martin was pastor in 1859. John T. Shell in 1872. Since 1880 nineteen pastors have served as follows:

John G. Hill	1880
J. K. Faulkner	May 27, 1882
G. J. Wilkie	August 5, 1883
J. T. Shell	September 20, 1884
J. A. Hoyle	June 21, 1885
W. B. McClure	October 20, 1895
B. L. Hoke	September 28, 1903
W. B. McClure	May 21, 1904
J. H. Vipperman	October 9, 1909
G. P. Abernethy	March 21, 1910
C. A. Caldwell	November 5, 1911
W. W. Rimmer	November 5, 1913
J. A. Hoyle	December 10, 1916
L. P. Smith	September 16, 1917
S. A. Stroup	September 7, 1919
J. P. Bennet	October 22, 1922
C. M. Robinson	April 20, 1924
R. G. Short	November 15, 1925
L. A. McClure	February 21, 1926
- until	November 15, 1959
T. L. Cashwell	Supply
R. N. Huckaby	November 6, 1960
- until	February 1, 1963
R. W. Abrams	Supply
E. B. Elmore	July 21, 1963

In the history of the church, Rev. L. A. McClure has served the longest pastorate - 33 years and 3 months.

DEACONS

Since October 30, 1882 the following men have been ordained as deacons by Mt. Ruhama Baptist Church:

J. Lemuel Crouse
Daniel H. Abernethy
Jonas Deal
E. Forney Wilson
Wesley W. Laney
J. Carrie Barker
John A. Hewitt
Alexander C.Summitt
Peter H. Cline
William McDuffe Caldwell
Marion Laney
Roy Williams
Tate H. Caldwell
Hoyle Laney
Rans Campbell
Lee Campbell
Edward J. Caldwell
Claude Abernethy
Lowell Caldwell
Glenn Abernethy
Robert Drum
Johnnie Murray
John L. Caldwell
Frank Ballard
David H. Caldwell
George W. Caldwell
Brown Laney, Sr.
Ray Caldwell
Alvin Stewart
Winfield Caldwell

In October 1959 the church voted to adopt the Rotation of Deacons. Since this time the following have been ordained as deacons:

Coyte Punch
Bill Beard
Ray Von Caldwell
Harvey Bandy
Brown Laney, Jr.
Harry Abernethy
Roy Ratchford, Jr.
John Sipe
Roy Smith, Jr.
Frank Caldwell
Ralph Caldwell
Garland Goodson
Melvin Robinson
Kenneth Trouille
James Caldwell
Manning Bell
Irving Henley

Floyd Drum, E. B. Goodin, Foy Goodin, Howard Josey and perhaps others joined our church by letter as ordained deacons and served.

Under the rotating system, sixteen deacons make up the active board of deacons, while the others are listed as inactive. Each year four of the active deacons go on the inactive list for at least one year and are replaced by four men who have been on the inactive list or newly ordained by the church. The present board of deacons for 1966 are: Alvin Stewart, Chm., Coyte Punch, Harvey Bandy, Kenneth Trouille, Bill Beard, Manning Bell, James Caldwell, Brown Laney, Jr., Ray Caldwell, Howard Josey, Irving Henley, Brown Laney, Sr., Harry Abernethy, John Sipe, Roy Ratchford and Roy Smith, Jr.

TRUSTEES

The March 31, 1889 minutes said that the deacons were appointed trustees to hold the deeds of the church land. The deacons served as trustees until December 31, 1961 when the church adopted the Rotating Trustee System. "The church shall elect three members to serve as trustees. Their term of office shall be for three years with one-third of the members elected each year. The trustees shall hold in trust the title to all church property and shall represent the church in all matters of legal responsibility regarding the purchase, improvement and disposal of church property as the church may direct." The following have served as trustees: Ray Caldwell, Grover Lineberger, Alvin Stewart, Conley Warren, Brown Laney, Jr., Brather Beard and Glenn Abernethy. Present trustees for 1966 are: Ray Caldwell, Brather Beard, and Glenn Abernethy.

SUNDAY SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS

For the past fifty years the following have served as Sunday School Superintendents: Marion C. Laney, Tate Caldwell, W. Mack Caldwell, Harvey Caldwell, Fred Caldwell, Robert Drum, Glenn Abernethy, Lawrence Caldwell, Lee Campbell, George W. Caldwell, Ray Caldwell, Alvin Stewart, Coyte Punch and Brown Laney, Jr. The present superintendent is Coyte Punch.

PRAYER MEETINGS

The first mention of prayer meeting was in the October 2, 1881 minute. It stated that the church met for the purpose of holding a prayer meeting on the third Sunday in October. April 23, 1884 Pastor J. A. Hoyle made remarks in regard to holding prayer meeting and urged it to be kept up by the church. We have no complete history on the Prayer Services through the years. Sometimes the services were held after Sunday School on the Sundays when there were no preaching services. For a number of years they were held on Sunday Nights until the Training Union was organized; after this they were held on Wednesday nights. Usually these prayer services were conducted by some lay-member of the church, but since the church now has a full-time pastor the pastor has charge of the Wednesday night Prayer Services. Down through the years the attendance is not as large as it should be when we think of the value of prayer in the work of the church.

DISCIPLINE

The Feb. 12, 1881 minute says, "1st item of business: Inquired into the fellowship of the church - all in peace." Members were excluded for the following things mentioned in the minutes if they did not confess and ask the church to bear with them: Falsehood, profanity, swearing, drinking, adultery, fornication, disorderly conduct, playing cards, dancing, circulating unbecoming

talk, breaking the Sabbath, distilling fruit, selling fruit to be distilled, unfaithfulness, non-fellowship, non-attendance and joining other denominations. There was a committee of investigation and references. They had the power to investigate rumors, settle difficulties, report to the church and recommend exclusion if necessary.

The March 24, 1888 minute said, "Members that have not contributed anything for the support of the Gospel since Jan. 1887 be given three months time and if they do not contribute they will be considered under censure of the church for not helping to support the Gospel unless it be members that the church would consider to be excused. No disorderly member will be notified to attend church but one time."

The Catawba River Association met with Mt. Ruhama in 1830 and 1847. The South Fork held its second annual session here in 1880 and met here again in 1928, 1941, 1951 and 1962.

A Centennial Anniversary of the organization of Mt. Ruhama was held April 28, 29 and 30, 1916.

The only Homecomings recorded were 1929, 1946, 1951 and the church has voted to have one the Fifth Sunday in July 1966.

TRAINING UNION

There was a B Y P U at Mt. Ruhama in 1930. The minute of Nov. 27, 1930 says, "Our BYPU gave us a good program." Later the work was called B T U. On October 20, 1940 the church voted to organize a BTU and on Nov. 2 the general officers were approved. Rev. W. C. Reed, principal of Balls Creek School was named as general director. Since then the following have served as directors: Ray Caldwell, Winfield Caldwell, Alvin Stewart, Mrs. Etta Caldwell, Mrs. Mettie Caldwell, Coyte Punch, Harding Caldwell, Thomas Ervin, Guy Helms, Mrs. Virginia Wright, Howard Laney, Miss Mildred Spencer, Harvey Bandy, Bill Beard, David Lee Stewart, Melvin Robinson. Present director is Leonard Wright.

W. M. U.

There was a WMU at Mt. Ruhama around 1920. It was dropped for a while but records show that Mrs. W. C. Reed was president of the WMU here in 1936. Since then the following have served as presidents: Mrs. Bartley Caldwell, Mrs. Johnnie Campbell, Mrs. Olin Abernethy, Mrs. Clarence Punch, Mrs. E. A. Ervin, Mrs. Frank Ballard, Mrs. David H. Caldwell, Mrs. Robert Caldwell, Mrs. Yates Beard, Mrs. John Beatty, Mrs. Winfield Caldwell, Mrs. Alvin Stewart, Mrs. David Lee Stewart, Mrs. Frank Caldwell, present WMU president. In 1965 the church reported 11 WMU organizations, WMS, YWA, GA's and Sunbeams with a total enrollment of 155.

Members of W. M. U. hold 37 Leadership Cards.

The W. M. U. received Honor Recognition from the Southern Baptist Convention for two years; 1963-64 and 1964-65. The first and only W. M. U. of the South Fork Association to receive this honor. The W. M. U. has been recognized for Missionary Reading for the year of 1964-1965. The W. M. U. is a fully graded organization.

The first Queen to be crowned in Girls Auxiliary was Gail Goodson, May 1961. The first Queen Regents in Service to be crowned were Mable Stewart and Susan Wright. These were the first Queen Regents In Service to be crowned in the South Fork Association. Girls Auxiliary reached the 50th Anniversary Goal in 1963.

Young Women Auxiliary presented the first White Bible to Betty Hendricks, February 1964. Y. W. A. presented First Citation Key to Millicent Bell and Geraldine Auton, July 1964. Y. W. A. First Honor Citation (an Honor Guard) was presented to Millicent Bell, May 1966. This was the first Honor Citation to be presented in the South Fork Association.

During a part of March and April, 1965 our pastor, Rev. Eugene B. Elmore was honored by the Foreign Mission Board when he was chosen to do Evangelistic work for three weeks in British Guiana, South American. Mrs. Elmore also made the trip to South America with her husband.

BROTHERHOOD

In 1953 Yates Beard was president of Men's Brotherhood. Since then the following have served: Garland Goodson, Thomas Ervin, David Lee Stewart, Leonard Wright, Alvin Stewart, John Sipe, Roy Smith, Jr., James, present Brotherhood president. In 1965 there was an enrollment of 65 in the Brotherhood and RA's.

"Family Night" is held at the church the First Thursday Night in each month when the men, women and children meet in their respective organizations for missionary study.

The first record of Vacation Bible School at Mt. Ruhama was 1954 with 141 enrolled and an average attendance of 132. The school was then held at night.

MUSIC

The October 9, 1910 minute said, "The church received the organ as church property." This peddle-organ was the first musical instrument for Mt. Ruhama. It was used until October 15, 1933 when Robert Drum, Roy Ratchford and Lee Campbell were appointed to get prices and buy a piano. The old organ was sold to the highest bidder for $2.50. On October 4, 1947 the church decided to buy a new piano before next Sunday as the South Fork Singing Convention was meeting here. Leonard Hovis, Ray Caldwell, Winfield Caldwell were named as a committee to buy the new piano.

A NEW ELECTRIC HAMMOND ORGAN, GIFT FROM MRS. ZETTIE WILSON, WAS DEDICATED WITH A SPECIAL SERVICE OCTOBER, 1961

On August 20, 1961 the church voted to accept the gift of a $3000.00 electric Hammond organ from Mrs. Zettie Wilson. The organ was first used August 27 and was dedicated with a special service October 29, 1961.

On February 13, 1966 the church voted to buy seven new studio-type Kimbrell pianos. One was placed in the church auditorium and the others in the department assembly rooms of the new educational building.

Osco Laney has the longest record of service in the Music Department in Mt. Ruhama's history. He was elected Choir Director on August 31, 1929 and served until he resigned August 4, 1951, serving a period of 22 years. Music teachers taught two weeks music schools a number of years and the choir attended the South Fork Singing Conventions in May and October.

Ray Von Caldwell was elected director in 1951 and resigned Dec. 5, 1953 when he was drafted into the U. S. Army. Udean Burke was elected and served until June 1959. Ray Von Caldwell was again elected and served until November 1962 when he went to Maiden First Church as Music Director. Gerald Caldwell, present director, has served since November 1962.

Until recent years the pianist was chosen by the choir director. Mrs. Cletus Drum has possibly served as pianist longer than any others. Since the gift of the organ in 1961 she has served as organist. Mrs. Clarence Hoyle is pianist.

IN MEMORY

During the past one hundred and fifty years a number of young men of our church family have served in the armed services of our country. As far as can be determined Wyley Caldwell, pictured above, son of Mr. & Mrs. C. W. Caldwell is the only one who gave his life in the service of our country.

GROWTH

Year	Members	S.S.	Contributions
1880	111		16.15
1890	212	47	36.00
1900	226	84	107.76
1904	254	104	34.19
1916	197	161	166.85
1920	196	130	1,202.98
1925	199	207	692.81
1930	248	187	1,653.95
1935	320	287	986.55
1941	370	298	1,881.03
1945	410	352	2,452.42
1950	427	425	24,478.09
1955	462	533	11,407.50
1960	502	565	19,378.00
1965	569	530	45,469.00

CHURCH PARSONAGE ERECTED IN 1960

PARTIAL VIEW OF CEMETERY

MT. RUHAMA'S CEMETERY

It is not known at what date a burying ground was started here. It may have been before the Mt. Ruhama Church was organized. There were no markers to the older graves in the cemetery-only field rocks to mark the graves. Some of these older graves may have been the charter members of Mt. Ruhama. Until about sixty years ago there were no undertakers in this section. Coffins were made of wood, smaller at the ends, larger in the center and were covered with black cloth. They were hauled to the cemetery in wagons. Some of the funeral services were not conducted when the person was buried but at a later date. Until the 1950's graves in our cemetery were dug by a few members of our church with no cost of opening the grave to the deceased's family. Members of the church kept the graves hilled up and the cemetery cleaned off. August 26, 1962 the church voted to grass the cemetery and that all the known graves be marked with some kind of inexpensive marker. As there had been much discussion in regard to selling plots in the cemetery the church voted Nov. 4, 1962 that the church would not sell plots to anyone but anyone wishing to be buried here would have a place to be buried and that space would be left for the family to be buried together. Lee Campbell and Brown Laney were to continue looking after the family burying places.

The graves in the cemetery were counted in February 1918 and there were 597. When Lee Campbell was buried on Jan. 24, 1966, his grave made a total of 1,012 in our cemetery.

CONCLUSION

It is almost unbelivable the changes that have taken place during this 150 year period; the greatest having occured during the past twenty years since World War II. People were living in one room houses, at first log ones, with an open fireplace serving as the heating and cooking unit for the large family. The means of transportation was on foot, horseback or wagon. Most of the citizens of this community were farmers working the land with oxen, mules and later tractors. Even just 30 years ago almost everyone in our community made their livelihood by farming with cotton being the principal money crop. The boll weevil wrote the last line in the cotton patch chapter for our community thus forcing people to seek employment away from home by day labor in factories and elsewhere with many of the women also working at public work. We mention these changes because every change that affects the home life also affects the church life - for better or worse. Has the spiritual growth and the nearness to God in our lives kept pace with the material and financial growth of our community?

Mr. Graham in his history of the South Fork association published in 1900 said, "Mt. Ruhama is the only one of the old churches that has maintained a continuous existence and activity since organization. She has stood as a beacon light in what is now the South Fork Association. Mt. Ruhama has seldom been without a pastor and only four times unrepresented in the association to which it belonged. While this is true she has not for fifty years past exerted herself except in her own territory, and contributions have been meagre. No church in the association is more liberal in entertaining the association, Union Meeting or the brother who visits in its bounds.. There is a decided improvement now in the church and it bids fair to stand with the best. May she lead in good works as she has in maintainance of principles."

Mr. Ruhama was organized 177 years after the first Baptist church in America and 89 years after the first Baptist Church in North Carolina, so Mt. Ruhama is really one of the older churches in the Nation and State.

It is said that one of the meanings of the word Ruhama is "blessings" and truly the church has been a mountain of blessings to this community. Only Heaven will reveal all that has been accomplished by the faithful pastors and those who have been active in the Master's work here through the years.

We hope this history, the first published during this 150 years will give us a deeper appreciation of our church and will awake us out of sleep and inspire us to greater depths of Christian service.

Mt. Ruhama, thankful for God's blessings and the accomplishments of the past, depending upon His power and leadership "presses toward the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.
Speak unto my people that they go forward."

History Committee:

Mrs. Ruby L. Henley

Beda Campbell

Mrs. Evelyn J. Smith

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